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SIPDIS
STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC, WHA/EPSC, CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM; 2/11-16/10; BUENOS AIRES

SUMMARY

¶1. Argentine President Kirchner's invitation from President Obama to attend a nuclear summit in April received large, positive press coverage. Newspapers also widely reported on Iran's 31st Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, with articles highlighting the Iranian government trying to suppress opponents and heavily controlling media access to the demonstrations. End summary.

PRESIDENT CRISTINA KIRCHNER

ACCEPTS PRESIDENT OBAMA'S INVITATION

TO ATTEND NUCLEAR SECURITY SUMMIT,

NEW US SANCTIONS ON IRAN

¶2. Ranging from largest circulation Clarin to pro-government, business-financial Buenos Aires Economico, most 2/11 newspapers and TV stations extensively quoted President Obama's letter inviting President Cristina Kirchner to attend the April 12-13 Nuclear Security Summit. Second largest newspaper La Nacion highlighted that the Argentine government expects to use the visit to hold a bilateral meeting between President Obama and President Cristina Kirchner.

¶3. Pro-government, left-of-center Pagina 12 (2/12) reported that the Argentine Foreign Ministry reported President Cristina Kirchner will attend the Nuclear Security Summit. The article notes that attending leaders to the summit will likely discuss Iran's uranium enrichment policy and the diversification of energy sources promoted by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1231881

http://www.telam.com.ar/vernota.php?tipo=N&id_Pub=177218&id=340239&dis=1&sec=1

<http://www.ambito.com/noticia.asp?id=507339>

http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/elpais/1-14_0138-2010-02-12.html

¶4. Ambito Financiero's weekly opinion column (2/15) labeled Argentine President Kirchner as the "star" of April's nuclear summit, and the only regional leader to participate in the summit. The column believes President Obama's invitation is a reward to Kirchner for being "faithful" to Obama's nuclear agenda against Iran. This is in contrast to neighboring Brazil, whose public disagreement with the U.S. over Iran's nuclear program is "limiting its friendship with the U.S."

¶5. Clarin, La Nacion and conservative, business-financial Ambito Financiero (2/11) also reprinted international newswires on the U.S. Treasury Department's decision to slap new sanctions on several affiliates of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps over their alleged involvement in producing and spreading WMD. Under the headline "Obama activates sanctions against Iran; Israel demands to 'suffocate now,'" Ambito Financiero highlighted that Israel wants "suffocating economic sanctions (against Iran) now."

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/11/elmundo/i-02137632.htm>

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1231774

<http://www.ambito.com/diario/noticia.asp?id=507396>

PROTESTING DURING THE REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY

¶6. Javier Martin, centrist Critica's correspondent in Tehran, reported (2/12) on large opposition attendance at President Ahmadinejad's speech on the 31st Anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, despite the "vast police showing" and "extremely hard" repression by the police. Martin also commented on Iran's censorship of the press, as this celebration is the first time "three decades" that the press "could not report freely" on the event. Finally, Martin quotes anonymous State Department sources as saying that Iran's announcement shows that its intentions are "everything but peaceful."

http://criticadigital.com/impres/index.php?s_ecc=nota&nid=38382

¶7. Newswires about "police repression" appeared in Clarin, La Nacion, and Ambito Financiero on 2/12. Clarin's newswire reported on the "still undetermined amount of injured and arrested" from the opposition's "clash several times with police," while La Nacion mentioned the White House's support of "universal human rights" with regards to the protests. New York Times' columnist David Sanger's opinion article on President Obama's "three bets to dilute the conflict" with Iran also appeared in La Nacion.

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2010/02/12/elmundo/i-02138523.htm>

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1232219

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1232221

¶8. Ambito Financiero quoted State Department Spokesman Philip Crowley denouncing Iran's repression, which indicates a country "that fears its own people." It also had a second newswire

specifically reporting on Iranian and U.S. disagreements over whether Iran has the capability to enrich uranium to 80%.

19. On 2/16, Ambito Financiero also covered JCS Chairman Mullen's meeting with Israeli Defense Secretary Barak and Mullen's defense of diplomacy and sanctions against Iran. The article highlighted U.S. support of Israel and the fact that a "military attack was still on the table," even though the U.S. wants to impose tougher sanctions first.

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MARTINEZ